THE COALITION TO ABOLISH DEATH BY INCARCERATION

Who Does Pennsylvania Sentence to Die in Prison?[2]

Death By Incarceration keeps thousands of elderly people in prison

- Nearly half of people serving DBI in Pennsylvania are over **50 years old**, and over 70% are over 40.
- The average age of people serving DBI in Pennsylvania is 48 years old.
- Research shows that people are much less likely to be arrested for any criminal activity after the age of 40.

Pennsylvania condemns children and young people to die in prison

- The majority of people serving DBI in Pennsylvania were sentenced when they were 25 or younger. Recent neuroscientific research demonstrates that brain development remains ongoing until a person reaches the age of 25.
- Prior to the US Supreme Court rulings in Miller and Montgomery, Pennsylvania had sentenced more children to die in prison than anywhere else in the country or the world.

People of color are disproportionately sentenced to Death By Incarceration

- Black Pennsylvanians are sentenced to DBI at a rate **18 times higher** than white Pennsylvanians. The rate of DBI sentences for Latinx Pennsylvanians is 5 times higher than for white people.
- 65% of people serving DBI sentences in Pennsylvania are Black, while Black people make up 11% of the state's total population.

Women and Death By Incarceration

- There are 201 women sentenced to Death By Incarceration in Pennsylvania.
- Pennsylvania has not commuted the life sentence of a single woman serving DBI in the last 25 years.

Death By Incarceration for Felony Murder

- In Pennsylvania, DBI is a mandatory sentence for 1st and 2nd degree murder.
- As a result, there are 1,169 people serving DBI sentences for homicide cases in which they were not convicted of committing the homicide.

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[2] Data taken from "A Way Out - Abolishing Death By Incarceration in Pennsylvania: A Report On Life-Without-Parole Sentences". Quinn Cozzens & Bret Grote, Abolitionist Law Center (August 2018). http://abolitionistlawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ALC_AWayOut_27August_Full1.pdf

THE COALITION TO ABOLISH DEATH BY INCARCERATION

Support SB942 and HB135

What is "Death By Incarceration?"

A sentence of life without the possibility of parole condemns those who receive it to die in prison. That is why we call it "Death By Incarceration," or DBI. **More than 5300 Pennsylvanians are serving Death By Incarceration** — the second highest number of any state in the country.

Why support parole for people facing Death By Incarceration?

- **We believe that every human being has dignity, and that every individual deserves a chance at redemption.** Denying people the possibility of parole no matter how they may have changed or how many decades have passed undermines these ideals and ignores individual capacity for growth. Ending Death By Incarceration sends the message that our justice system values accountability and transformation, not simply punishment.

- **Death By Incarceration sentences waste valuable state resources.** It costs Pennsylvania an average of $47,000 to incarcerate a person for one year. That figure is even higher for many people serving DBI, because they are often older and have higher medical costs. A recent study estimates that it will cost Pennsylvania about $3.6 Million to incarcerate one person sentenced to DBI at the age of 25[1]. With Pennsylvania's schools and other institutions desperate for financial support, it is irresponsible to spend millions of dollars to continue incarcerating people for decades-old crimes.

- **Public safety would not be negatively impacted.** Allowing people sentenced to life to apply for parole would simply give them the chance to see the parole board for review. People commuted or paroled from life sentences have extremely low recidivism rates. Many people serving life are mentors, teachers, and peer educators from behind the prison walls. Giving them the chance to come home would allow them to do this valuable work in the community.

- **Death By Incarceration is outmoded and unjust.** 25 countries around the world have already declared life without parole to be unconstitutional. Here in the United States, 15 states have kept or decreased their life without parole populations to less than 1% of their total prison population — compared to 10% in Pennsylvania.

HB135 and SB942 would end Death by Incarceration and allow Pennsylvanians incarcerated for life to apply for parole after 15 years. These bills, introduced by Sen. Sharif Street and Rep. Jason Dawkins, would make Pennsylvania a model for other states seeking to reform their criminal justice systems. For questions or further information, contact CADBIphilly@gmail.com or call 267-606-0324.

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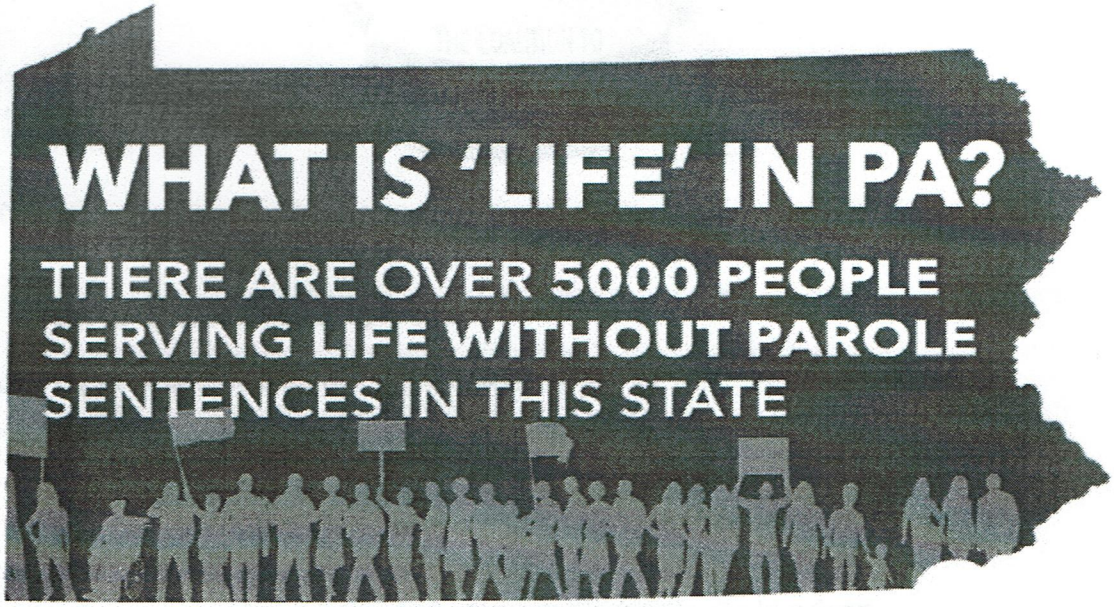
[1] http://abolitionistlawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ALC_AWayOut_27August_Full1.pdf



WHAT IS 'LIFE' IN PA?

THERE ARE OVER **5000 PEOPLE** SERVING **LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE** SENTENCES IN THIS STATE

In Pennsylvania, 'life' means your entire life. It is a sentence that condemns you to die in prison, which is why many instead call it Death By Incarceration.

Pennsylvania has more people serving Life Without Parole (LWOP) sentences than every state in the country except Florida.

This harsh sentencing does not improve public safety and disproportionately impacts poor people and people of color.

Life Without Parole is expensive and ineffective. It costs approximately $66,000 a year to incarcerate elderly prisoners, and their recidivism rate is extremely low.

We believe that **denying people the right to transformation and redemption** is an affront to everyone's humanity. That's why families, activists, and people of conscience, inside and outside of prison, have come together to form the **Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration**. Our goal is to end Life Without Parole sentencing in Pennsylvania.

JOIN US

CADBI General Meetings happen at 6:30 on the third Wednesday of every month, at Mosaic Community Church, 123 S 51st Street in Philadelphia (close to the 52nd street stop on the Market-Frankford Line). Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

IT'S TIME TO END LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE.

Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration • CADBIphilly@gmail.com • 267-606-0324
http://decarceratepa.info/CADBI • CADBI c/o Decarcerate PA, PO Box 40764, Phila. PA 19107